



SP-3711

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Fasbender et al.

Serial No.: 09/754,450

Filed: January 4, 2001

For: GAMING METHOD AND
APPARATUS WITH TRIGGERING OF
BONUS EVENTS BY THE PRESENCE OF
A TRIGGER SYMBOL IN PARTICULAR
LOCATIONS

Examiner: Unknown

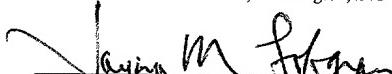
Group Art Unit: 3711

Attorney Docket No.: 4662US (300-016)

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Box NON-FEE AMENDMENT
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to examination of the above-referenced patent application on the merits, entry of the amendments as set forth herein is respectfully solicited.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph number 0010 with the following:

[0010] In conventional “double-down stud” gaming devices and methods, as disclosed in U.S. Patents 5,820,460, 5,411,257, 5,251,897, and 5,167,413, a hand of five cards is dealt, with the faces of one or more of the cards not being shown to the player. Based on the cards that are made visible to the player and prior to making the remaining cards visible to the player, the player may choose to wager an additional amount, thereby increasing the amount of winnings that are available to the player.

Please replace paragraph number 0015 with the following:

[0015] The present invention includes a gaming method providing a primary game in conjunction with one or more bonus games, as well as apparatus for effecting the method. In the primary game, a player selects, from an array of symbols to be randomly generated, one or more paylines along which the game will be played. The array of symbols is then generated and displayed. If a trigger symbol is present along one or more of the selected paylines, one or more bonus games may be initiated. In addition, the presence of a trigger symbol in a specified location within the array, such as at the center, may cause another bonus event to occur. For example, a part of the payout or the total payout of the game may be increased as a result of the additional bonus event.

Please replace paragraph number 0024 with the following:

[0024] FIG. 4 is a schematic representation of a primary game of an exemplary, poker embodiment of the method of the invention, wherein the primary game is stud poker;

Please replace paragraph number 0040 with the following:

[0040] When the primary game is stud poker, once a “hand” of cards 36' have been dealt, each selected payline 35 is examined to determine whether the combination of cards 36'

thereon comprises a winning hand. For example, certain known combinations of winning cards, including, without limitation, an ordered royal flush (a type of winning poker hand unique to gaming devices), a royal flush, a straight flush, four-of-a-kind, a full house, a flush, a straight, three-of-a-kind, two pair, and certain pairs of cards, may comprise a winning hand. The amount of award provided to the player for receiving a winning hand on a particular selected payline 35 preferably corresponds to the combination of cards 36' along that selected payline 35, and may be determined by referring to a pay table 39, such as that depicted in FIG. 4, suitable for the type of primary game being played.

Please replace paragraph number 0043 with the following:

[0043] When play proceeds to a bonus round, as shown in FIG. 5, a bonus game is played. In the example depicted in FIG. 5, the bonus game is draw poker, with cards 36' of the original, dealt draw poker hand on bonus payline 38' being the same cards 36' as those that were present in a corresponding selected payline 35 from the primary game. As shown in FIGs. 5 and 6, the player may then decide which cards 36H' to hold, while discarding the remaining cards 36D', which may then be randomly replaced with other, previously undealt cards 36R' from the same deck or from a "fresh" deck which may include the same number and types of cards 36' as the deck used in the primary game. Again, the amount of the award or award increase provided to the player based on the results of each bonus game may correspond to the final combination of cards 36' present in the bonus game, and may be determined by referring to a pay table 39 associated with the type of bonus game being played. The same or different pay tables 39 may be used for the primary and bonus games.

Please replace paragraph number 0048 with the following:

[0048] An example of an electronic gaming device 40 in which the poker embodiment of the method of the present invention may be effected is illustrated in FIG. 7. Gaming device 40 includes one or more processors 42 under control of programming (e.g., software or firmware)

that effects the method disclosed herein with reference to FIGs. 4-6. While a single processor 42 may be used in gaming device 40, different processors 42 may be used, for example, to effect the primary game and the bonus game. Each processor 42 communicates, as known in the art, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, with memory 43 of a known type, including read-only memory (ROM), random access memory (RAM), a hard drive, or CD-ROM, a display 44 of a known type (e.g., a cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor, a plasma monitor, a liquid crystal display, or other flat panel display, etc.), input elements 46 of a known type, such as the illustrated buttons or touch-sensitive locations on display 44, as well as with other known types of output devices, such as sirens, bells, whistles, other alarms, and audio devices. Data are input into and output from each processor 42 of gaming device 40 in accordance with the method of the present invention. Of course, gaming device 40 may also include one or more wagering input components 48 of known types, such as a currency receptacle, a credit or debit card reader, or a smart card reader, to permit a player to wager money on the games being played, as well as one or more payout components 49, as known in the art. The various elements of gaming device 40 and their association with each processor 42 and with one another are well known in the art.

Please replace paragraph number 0059 with the following:

[0059] The programming that controls processor 52 causes various logic circuits or groups of logic circuits of processor 52 to execute various functions, or elements of the inventive method. In the exemplary reel type embodiment of the inventive method, which is described herein with reference to FIGs. 8 and 9, one logic circuit of processor 52 (FIG. 10) may identify selected paylines 35" as a wager of the money credits or tournament points indicated by memory 53 (FIG. 7) to be available is placed thereon. Another logic circuit may randomly assign symbols 36" of a predetermined set to image sites 32" of array 30" or cause adjacent reels with series of symbols 36" thereon to spin and stop in random positions, with the shown, adjacent symbols 36" of each reel forming a column of symbols 36" of array 30". Yet another logic circuit of processor 52 may determine whether a winning combination of symbols 36" is

present along any selected payline 35" and, if so, determine the corresponding award, while another logic circuit may cause the amount of credit stored in memory 53 to be increased accordingly. Still another logic circuit may determine whether a bonus triggering event has occurred, either in or along a selected payline 35" or at a trigger site 32T". Logic circuits of processor 52, under control of appropriate programming, may also effect the appropriate bonus events, including both bonus games and increases in awards, as well as other elements of the inventive methods.

Please replace paragraph number 0060 with the following:

[0060] The apparatus illustrated in FIGs. 7 and 10 may comprise stand-alone gaming devices 40, 50 or stand-alone computers, or may (see FIG. 11) be networked to a central computer 60 (e.g., a server or game controlling computer) of a casino, or directly to other gaming devices 40, 50, by way of a network card 61 and appropriate links 62 therefor (i.e., a local area network (LAN)), by use of a modem or other communication component 63 that facilitates the use of broadband telecommunications between gaming devices 40, 50 or of gaming devices 40, 50 with a central computer 60 (i.e., a wide area network (WAN) or the World-Wide Web (WWW)), or otherwise, as known in the art. Accordingly, gaming devices 40, 50 may be linked to a central computer 60 and/or other gaming devices 40, 50 that are located at the same site or at remote sites (e.g., in other casinos or even other geographic locations). Exemplary ways in which gaming devices 40, 50 may be linked to one another are described in co-pending U.S. Application Ser. No. 09/675,829, filed on September 29, 2000 (which discloses linking gaming devices for the purpose of tournament play), and in U.S. Patent 6,039,648, the disclosures of each of which are hereby incorporated in their entireties by this reference.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below, in clean form, for clarity.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. A gaming method, comprising:

randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set to an array of image sites in a primary game;

determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline within said array; and

determining whether a triggering event is present in at least one of said at least one selected payline and at a predetermined or prespecified trigger site of said array and, if said triggering event is present, awarding an option of initiating a bonus game similar in type to said primary game.

2. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning cards from a deck of cards to said array of image sites.

3. The gaming method of claim 2, further comprising randomly replacing at least one selected card with another undealt card from said deck.

4. The gaming method of claim 2, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether at least one specific poker combination is present on at least one selected payline across said array.

5. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning reel type slot machine symbols to said array.

6. The gaming method of claim 5, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether a predetermined number of symbols are the same on at least one selected payline across said array.

7. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present in at least one selected payline.

8. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a specific combination of symbols is present along at least one selected payline.

9. (amended) The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present at said predetermined or prespecified trigger site.

10. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising initiating a bonus event if said triggering event is present.

11. The gaming method of claim 10, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises initiating a bonus game.

12. The gaming method of claim 10, further comprising using symbols of said predetermined set in said bonus game.

13. The gaming method of claim 10, further comprising using symbols differing at least in part from said predetermined set in said bonus game.

14. The gaming method of claim 10, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises increasing an award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

15. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising providing an award if at least one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

16. The gaming method of claim 15, wherein said providing said award comprises providing at least one of money, monetary credit, tournament qualification points, or tournament points.

17. The gaming method of claim 15, further comprising, if said triggering event is present, permitting a player to initiate a bonus event in lieu of receiving said award.

18. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising, if said triggering event is present and a player makes a wager, permitting the player to initiate a bonus event.

19. (amended) The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

20. A gaming method, comprising:
randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set to an array of image sites;
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline across said array;

determining whether a first triggering event is present in at least one selected payline across said array; and

determining whether a second triggering event is present at a trigger location of said array.

21. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning cards from a deck of cards to said array of image sites.

22. The gaming method of claim 21, further comprising replacing at least one selected card with another undealt card from said deck.

23. The gaming method of claim 21, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether at least one specific poker combination is present on at least one selected payline within said array.

24. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning reel type slot machine symbols to said array.

25. The gaming method of claim 24, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether a predetermined number of symbols are the same on at least one selected payline across said array.

26. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said first triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present in at least one selected payline.

27. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said first triggering event is present comprises determining whether a specific combination of symbols is present along at least one selected payline.

28. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising initiating a bonus game if said first triggering event occurs.

29. The gaming method of claim 28, further comprising using symbols of said predetermined set in said bonus game.

30. The gaming method of claim 28, further comprising using symbols differing at least in part from said predetermined set in said bonus game.

31. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said second triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present at a predetermined or preselected trigger location.

32. The gaming method of claim 31, further comprising initiating a bonus event if said second triggering event occurs.

33. The gaming method of claim 32, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises increasing an award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

34. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising providing an award if at least one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

35. The gaming method of claim 34, wherein said providing said award comprises providing at least one of money, monetary credit, tournament qualification points, or tournament points.

36. The gaming method of claim 34, further comprising, if said first triggering event occurs, permitting a player to initiate a bonus game in lieu of receiving said award.

37. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising, if said triggering event is present and a player makes a wager, permitting the player to initiate a bonus game.

38. (amended) The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

39. (amended) A gaming method, comprising:
randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set for use with a game of a first type to an array of image sites in a primary game;
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline across said array and, if so, making an award available for said primary game; and
determining whether a triggering event is present in at least one selected payline within said array and, if so, at least providing a player with an option to proceed to a bonus game similar in type to said primary game.

40. The gaming method of claim 39, further comprising, if said triggering event is present, initiating said bonus game.

41. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a bonus game of said first type.

42. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a bonus game of a second, different type.

43. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises:

assigning symbols to image locations of a bonus payline; and
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in said bonus payline.

44. (amended) The gaming method of claim 43, wherein said assigning symbols comprises:

assigning symbols from a corresponding selected payline to said image symbols of said bonus payline;

permitting the player to select at least one image location at which a corresponding symbol is to be held; and

replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected symbol.

45. The gaming method of claim 44, wherein said replacing comprises replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected, previously unused symbol from said predetermined set.

46. The gaming method of claim 44, wherein said replacing comprises replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected symbol from another set.

47. The gaming method of claim 39, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

48. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating is effected responsive to placement of an additional wager.

49. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating is effected if a player chooses to play said bonus game in lieu of receiving said award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present.

50. A gaming device, comprising:
at least one processor including:
a first logic circuit configured to, in a primary game, randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites of an array;
a second logic circuit configured to identify at least one selected payline;
a third logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;
a fourth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a first trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and
a fifth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a second trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said array;

memory associated with said at least one processor;
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

51. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

52. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

53. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

54. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

55. (amended) The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

56. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said first trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

57. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said first trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

58. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a sixth logic circuit configured to initiate a bonus game if said first trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline.

59. The gaming device of claim 58, wherein said bonus game is similar in type to said primary game.

60. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said second trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

61. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a seventh logic circuit configured to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said second trigger event occurs.

62. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

63. (amended) The gaming device of claim 50, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said array, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

64. (amended) The gaming device of claim 63, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said first trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict a bonus game.

65. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

66. A gaming device, comprising:
at least one processor including:
a first logic circuit configured, in a primary game of a first type, to randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;
a second logic circuit configured to identify at least one selected payline;
a third logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;
a fourth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and
a fifth logic circuit configured to initiate a bonus game of said first type if said trigger event has occurred;
memory associated with said at least one processor;
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

67. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

68. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

69. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

70. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

71. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

72. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

73. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

74. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, further comprising a sixth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said plurality of image sites.

75. The gaming device of claim 74, wherein said another trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

76. The gaming device of claim 74, further comprising a seventh logic circuit configured to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said another trigger event occurs.

77. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

78. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said plurality of image sites, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

79. (amended) The gaming device of claim 78, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said bonus game.

80. The gaming device of claim 66, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

81. (amended) A gaming device, comprising:
at least one processor programmed to:
randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;
identify at least one selected payline;
evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;
evaluate whether a trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and
initiate a bonus game of a first type if said trigger event has occurred;
memory associated with said at least one processor;
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

82. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

83. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

84. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

85. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

86. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

87. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

88. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

89. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one processor is further programmed to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said plurality of image sites.

90. The gaming device of claim 89, wherein said another trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

91. The gaming device of claim 89, wherein said at least one processor is further programmed to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said another trigger event occurs.

92. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

93. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said at least one processor to randomly assign symbols, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said plurality of image sites, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

94. (amended) The gaming device of claim 93, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said at least one processor to evaluate whether said trigger event occurred, if said trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said bonus game.

95. The gaming device of claim 81, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

96. (amended) A gaming method, comprising:
responsive to placement of a wager, initiating a primary game by allowing a player to select at least one selected payline from a plurality of available paylines of an array of image sites; randomly assigning symbols to said array of image sites; evaluating each selected payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on a selected payline, providing an award to the player; evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger event has occurred; for each selected payline on which a trigger event has occurred, initiating a bonus game on a bonus payline, said bonus game including replacing a symbol at at least one image site of said selected payline; and evaluating said bonus payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on said bonus payline, providing a bonus award to the player.

97. The gaming method of claim 96, wherein said initiating said primary game comprises initiating a stud poker game.

98. The gaming method of claim 97, wherein said evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger event has occurred comprises evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger card is present thereon.

99. The gaming method of claim 98, wherein said evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger card is present thereon comprises evaluating each selected payline to determine whether an "Ace of Spades" symbol appears thereon.

100. The gaming method of claim 98, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a draw poker game.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Accompanying this Preliminary Amendment is a Letter to the Chief Draftsman submitting proposed revisions to FIGS. 1, 4-6, and 11. Approval of the revised figures is respectfully requested.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1994 50-130-100

REMARKS

No new matter has been added. The Applicants again request entry of the amendments as set forth in the Appendices hereto prior to examination of the application on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 14, 2001
BGP/df:jml

Enclosure: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph number 0010 with the following:

[0010] In conventional "double-down stud" gaming devices and methods, as disclosed in U.S. Patents 5,820,460, 5,411,257, 5,251,897, and 5,167,413, a hand of five cards is dealt, with the faces of one or more of the cards not being shown to the player. Based on the cards that are made visible to the player and prior to making the remaining cards visible to the player, the player may choose to wager an additional amount, thereby increasing the amount of {winning} winnings that are available to the player.

Please replace paragraph number 0015 with the following:

[0015] The present invention includes a gaming method providing a primary game in conjunction with one or more bonus games, as well as apparatus for effecting the method. In the primary game, a player selects, from an array of symbols to be randomly generated, one or more paylines along which the game will be played. The array of symbols is then generated and displayed. If a trigger symbol is present along one or more of the selected paylines, one or more bonus games may be initiated. In addition, the presence of a trigger symbol in a specified location within the array, such as at the center, may cause another bonus event to occur. For example, a part of the payout or the total payout of the game may be increased as a result of the additional bonus event.

Please replace paragraph number 0024 with the following:

[0024] [FIGs.] FIG. 4 is a schematic representation of a primary game of an exemplary, poker embodiment of the method of the invention, wherein the primary game is stud poker;

Please replace paragraph number 0040 with the following:

[0040] When the primary game is stud poker, once a "hand" of cards 36' have been dealt, each selected payline 35 is examined to determine whether the combination of cards 36' thereon comprises a winning hand. For example, certain known combinations of winning cards, including, without limitation, an ordered royal flush (a type of winning poker hand unique to gaming devices), a royal flush, a straight flush, four-of-a-kind, a full house, a flush, a straight, three-of-a-kind, two pair, and certain pairs of cards, may comprise a winning hand. The amount of award provided to the player for receiving a winning hand on a particular selected payline 35 preferably corresponds to the combination of cards 36' along that selected payline 35, and may be determined by referring to a pay table [40] 39, such as that depicted in FIG. 4, suitable for the type of primary game being played.

Please replace paragraph number 0043 with the following:

[0043] When play proceeds to a bonus round, as shown in FIG. 5, a bonus game is played. In the example depicted in FIG. 5, the bonus game is draw poker, with cards 36' of the original, dealt draw poker hand on bonus payline [38] 38' being the same cards 36' as those that were present in a corresponding selected payline 35 from the primary game. As shown in FIGs. 5 and 6, the player may then decide which cards 36H' to hold, while discarding the remaining cards 36D', which may then be randomly replaced with other, previously undealt cards 36R' from the same deck or from a "fresh" deck which may include the same number and types of cards 36' as the deck [use] used in the primary game. Again, the amount of the award or award increase provided to the player based on the results of each bonus game may correspond to the final combination of cards 36' present in the bonus game, and may be determined by referring to a pay table [40] 39 associated with the type of bonus game being played. The same or different pay tables [40] 39 may be used for the primary and bonus games.

Please replace paragraph number 0048 with the following:

[0048] An example of an electronic gaming device 40 in which the poker embodiment of the method of the present invention may be effected is illustrated in FIG. 7. Gaming device 40 includes one or more processors 42 under control of programming (e.g., software or firmware) that effects the method disclosed herein with reference to FIGs. 4-6. While a single processor 42 may be used in gaming device 40, different processors 42 may be used, for example, to effect the primary game and the bonus game. Each processor 42 communicates, as known in the art, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, with memory 43 of a known type, including read-only memory (ROM), random access memory (RAM), a hard drive, or CD-ROM, a display 44 of a known type (e.g., a cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor, a plasma monitor, a liquid crystal display, or other flat panel display, etc.), input elements 46 of a known type, such as the illustrated buttons or touch-sensitive locations on display 44, as well as with other known types of output devices, such as sirens, bells, whistles, other alarms, and audio devices. Data are input into and output from each processor 42 of gaming device 40 in accordance with the method of the present invention. Of course, gaming device 40 may also include one or more wagering input components 48 of known types, such as a currency receptacle, a credit or debit card reader, or a smart card reader, to permit a player to wager money on the games being played, as well as one or more payout components 49, as known in the art. The various elements of gaming device 40 and their association with each processor 42 and with one another are well known in the art.

Please replace paragraph number 0059 with the following:

[0059] The programming that controls processor 52 causes various logic circuits or groups of logic circuits of processor 52 to execute various functions, or elements of the inventive method. In the exemplary reel type embodiment of the inventive method, which is described herein with reference to FIGs. 8 and 9, one logic circuit of processor 52 (FIG. 10) may identify selected paylines 35" as a wager of the money credits or tournament points indicated by memory 53 (FIG. 7) to be available is placed thereon. Another logic circuit may randomly

assign symbols 36" of a predetermined set to image sites 32" of array 30" or cause adjacent reels with series of symbols 36" thereon to spin and stop in random positions, with the shown, adjacent symbols 36" of each reel forming a column of symbols 36" of array 30". Yet another logic circuit of processor 52 may determine whether a winning combination of symbols 36" is present along any selected payline 35" and, if so, determine the corresponding award, while another logic circuit may cause the amount of credit stored in memory 53 to be increased accordingly. Still another logic circuit may determine whether a bonus triggering event has occurred, either in or along a selected payline 35" or at a trigger site 32T". Logic circuits of processor 52, under control of appropriate programming, may also effect the appropriate bonus events, including both bonus games and increases in awards, as well as other elements of the inventive methods.

Please replace paragraph number 0060 with the following:

[0060] The apparatus illustrated in FIGs. 7 and 10 may comprise stand-alone gaming devices 40, 50 or stand-alone computers, or may (see FIG. 11) be networked to a central computer 60 (e.g., a server or game controlling computer) of a casino, or directly to other gaming devices 40, 50, by way of a network card 61 and appropriate links 62 therefor (i.e., a local area network (LAN)), by use of a modem or other communication component 63 that facilitates the use of broadband telecommunications between gaming devices 40, 50 or of gaming devices 40, 50 with a central computer 60 (i.e., a wide area network (WAN) or the World-Wide Web (WWW)), or otherwise, as known in the art. Accordingly, gaming devices 40, 50 may be linked to a central computer 60 and/or other gaming devices 40, 50 that are located at the same site or at remote sites (e.g., in other casinos or even other geographic locations). Exemplary ways in which gaming devices 40, 50 may be linked to one another are described in co-pending U.S. Application Ser. No. 09/675,829, filed on September 29, 2000 (which discloses linking gaming devices for the purpose of tournament play), and in U.S. Patent 6,039,648, the disclosures of each of which are hereby incorporated in their entireties by this reference.

IN THE CLAIMS:

A marked-up version of each of the presently amended claims, highlighting the changes thereto, follows:

9. (amended) The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present at [a] said predetermined or [preselected] prespecified trigger [location] site.

19. (amended) The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of [a] said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

38. (amended) The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of [a] said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

39. (amended) A gaming method, comprising:
randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set for use with a game of a first type to an array of image sites in a primary game;
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline across said array and, if so, making an award available for said primary game; and

determining whether a triggering event is present in at least one selected payline within said array and, if so, at least providing a player with an option to proceed to a bonus game similar in type to said primary game.

44. (amended) The gaming method of claim 43, wherein said assigning symbols comprises:
assigning symbols from a corresponding selected payline to said image symbols of said bonus payline;
permitting [a] the player to select at least one image location at which a corresponding symbol is to be held; and
replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected symbol.

50. A gaming device, comprising:
at least one processor including:
a first logic circuit configured to, in a primary game, randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites of an array;
a second logic circuit configured to identify at least one selected payline;
a third logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;
a fourth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a first trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and
a fifth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a second trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said array;
memory associated with said at least one processor;
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

55. (amended) The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

63. (amended) The gaming device of claim 50, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said array, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

64. (amended) The gaming device of claim 63, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said first trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict [said] a bonus game.

71. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

74. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, further comprising a sixth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said [array] plurality of image sites

78. (amended) The gaming device of claim 66, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said [array] plurality of image sites, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

79. (amended) The gaming device of claim 78, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said [first] trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said [a] bonus game.

81. (amended) A gaming device, comprising:
at least one processor programmed to:
randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;
identify at least one selected payline;
evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;
evaluate whether a trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and
initiate a bonus game of [said] a first type if said trigger event has occurred;
memory associated with said at least one processor;
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

86. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least a predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

89. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one processor is further programmed to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said [array] plurality of image sites.

93. (amended) The gaming device of claim 81, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said [first logic circuits] at least one processor to randomly assign symbols, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported

along carrier waves, to show said [array] plurality of image sites, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites of said plurality of image sites.

94. (amended) The gaming device of claim 93, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said [fourth logic circuit] at least one processor to evaluate whether said trigger event occurred, if said [first] trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said [a] bonus game.

96. (amended) A gaming method, comprising:
responsive to placement of a wager, initiating a primary game by allowing a player to select at least one selected payline from a plurality of available paylines of an array of image sites; randomly assigning symbols to said array of image sites; evaluating each selected payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on a selected payline, providing an award to the player; evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger event has occurred; for each selected payline on which a trigger event has occurred, initiating a bonus game on a bonus payline, said bonus game including [altering] replacing a symbol at at least one image site of said selected payline; and evaluating said bonus payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on said bonus payline, providing a bonus award to the player.

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Fasbender et al.

Serial No.: 09/754,450

Filed: January 4, 2001

For: GAMING METHOD AND
APPARATUS WITH TRIGGERING OF
BONUS EVENTS BY THE PRESENCE OF
A TRIGGER SYMBOL IN PARTICULAR
LOCATIONS

Examiner: Unknown

Group Art Unit: 3711

Attorney Docket No.: 4662US (300-016)

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper or fee along with any attachments referred to or identified as being attached or enclosed is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail (under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8(a)) on the date of deposit shown below with sufficient postage and in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

March 14, 2001
Date of Deposit


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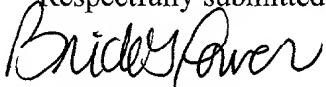
TRANSMITTAL OF FORMAL DRAWINGS

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Attached please find the formal drawings for this application.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: March 14, 2001

BGP/jml

Enclosure: Formal Drawings (8 sheets, 14 figures)

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